



## How to listen to your partner

### Activity 1 Practice listening with your full attention

- Practice listening without distraction by listening to another person for 5 minutes.
- Notice that there will be thoughts popping up or that you may have a strong feeling or impulse to comment. Park these thoughts or feelings by imagining that you place them in a basket next to you.
- Enjoy the freedom of not having to respond.
- If you do want to respond, wait for a few seconds before you come in. This will indicate to the other person that they have your full attention.

## Activity 2 Reflect back what is being said

- Agree to set time aside where you are focusing on listening to your partner. Don't make it longer than 10 min initially. The person who talks should choose a 'safe' subject initially, ie a topic that does not generate conflict.
- Your partner talks and leaves some pauses.
- In the pauses you repeat back in your own words what you heard your partner say. Your partner confirms whether you got it right and moves on or clarifies what has been said.
- When your partner has said everything they needed to say, you summarise what you heard your partner say. You check whether you got everything or whether something is missing in your summary.

## Activity 3 Demonstrating empathic understanding

- In addition to your practice in Activity 1 where you reflect back what you hear your partner say, let your partner know that you understand their feelings or thoughts by saying something like ‘That makes sense to me because...’ or ‘I can see what you are saying because...’ or ‘I understand because’.
- In addition to the words that you hear, also focus on the feelings that are expressed by your partner and let your partner know at the end what you think you heard them express. You might say something like ‘It sounds like you are feeling very...’ or ‘it seems that you are feeling ...’. Check that you got this right.
- Practice Activity 1 and 2 at least twice per week. Switch roles after the listening activities 1 and 2 are completed. You can either talk about something different or respond to the material that person who talked brought up.